



The Bitter Confusion



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Chapter 1 by Finney

His eyes flew open and he gasped air into his lungs, almost as if life had been breathed into him. His head throbbed, his heart pounded, and all he felt was confusion. His eyes were having a hard time adjusting to the light in the room he was in. Once they focused, he looked around. People were looking down at him inquisitively. Older people in lab coats with clipboards, younger people in strange royal blue uniform suits. And their eyes watched him expectantly. One man in a lab coat waved to him and said, "Hello. My name is Dr. Marshall. You must be confused, Hal."

Hal.

His name was Hal.

The man's voice was muffled, like there was a barrier between them. Hal soon realized there was. There was glass between them. He looked around and saw that he was lying down with a glass dome above him. In a capsule. He was even more utterly confused.

One of the younger people put a hand to the glass, the dark blue glove pressing against the surface. Hal reached a shaky palm up to meet it. Through the glass, Hal's hand turned the same color as the material on the other side of the glass. His eyes widened and he pulled his hand away quickly. Afraid. And his skin color returned to normal.

Dr. Marshall smiled, and so did the others. "Open it." He heard someone say.

There was a hissing sound as the glass case separated from the metal slab he was laying on. It retracted and slid away. Hal looked around and swallowed hard. So many questions flooded his mind, but he could only make out one.

"What am I?" He said quietly.

"You have the same DNA as a chimpanzee!" One woman in a lab coat said. "See if you can piece the rest together, Hal."

"Who am I?" He asked.

"Well that," Dr. Marshall said.

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Chapter 2 by Finney



He sat up on his table. He looked around only to realize how utterly blankly white the room was. He stared at the coated ones, waiting for some sort of instruction at all. They all just stood, staring at their masterpiece.

"Do I get a set of clothes or do you intend to freeze me?" Hal said.

A woman hesitated a moment before she processed his desire. She quickly fetched him a white robe. She smiled to him. He didn't know how to smile anymore. She helped him off the table and helped him get the robe on him nicely. She looked to Dr. Marshall who nodded to her. She suggested with her hands the Hal follow her. He, of course, did so, and they walked down the intensely boring hallway.

He waited until they ventured into a small room with two gorgeously brown chairs and a tan-walled room before he asked anything. "Did I..." he paused a few seconds, waiting for an answer that he didn't get, "die?"

"Have a seat and someone will be in to answer all your questions," she told him, still smiling a bit. She was still a bit excited about Project Hal. She soon left after getting him settled.

He sat in the room for hardly a minute before the man they called "Dr. Marshall" arrived. The Dr. was no longer wearing lab clothes. He wore a gray sweater with a forgettable pattern on the front only. His pants were equally dull. "I suspect you have but a few questions to ask. I believe I can assist."

"Did I die?" Hal asked quickly.

"Yes, of course, many times." Calmly Marshall returned.

Chapter 3 by intellikat



"Hmmm" Hal took this information in. "But I'm here now."

"Yes. Indeed you are."

"Alright. Well. Rather enough."

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"No fear of death. Makes you superior as a warrior on our behalf."

"Some woman. Some nondescript lab-coat. She mentioned I had the same DNA of a chameleon...?"

"Yes, yes. Diane. Umm... she's an intern."

"I can't possibly have the SAME DNA as a chameleon--"

"No, no. Of course not. An exaggeration on her part. We had begun drinking. We were a bit excited over the project's success." Dr. Marshall got up and shuffled over to a decanter of some liquid, which he poured into two glasses. He brought them both to Hal and handed him one. "To Project Hal," Marshall said. "To you."

Hal drank, and as he did, he noticed that his hand and arm had become the same brown colour and texture as the chair he sat upon.

"Tomorrow morning. 0400 hours. You're going into Zanzibarland. A rogue general has gotten a hold of the nuclear launch codes of three countries. He's demanding outrageous things. You must go in and procure the codes as well as eliminate the general. There is no one else who can succeed."

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